

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

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CONSTRUCTION IS PLANNED this year of a four-story laboratory wing on the department's headquarters in Berkeley. The million-dollar wing will house the activities of the department's cancer field research project.

During this year the department will intensify its efforts to blunt the sharply rising incidence of venereal disease. Venereal disease in California has increased at an alarming rate, and now is the top ranking communicable disease problem.

Special emphasis is being given to environmental health problems, in particular agricultural chemicals, pesticides and insecticides. Toward that end, and in conjunction with the University of California, the department has obtained a grant for study of the health effects of food additives upon the population.

The major concerns of the department include the continuous provision of a wholesome and entirely safe food supply; the unintended effects of food additives on the purity of the water supply and on contamination of the air; the maintenance of a safe environment for workmen engaged in the manufacture, preparation and use of agricultural chemicals, and the protection of persons who might be accidentally exposed through error to agricultural chemicals.

There were an estimated 377,000 live births in California in 1963, a decrease of about a thousand from the previous year. In spite of California's increasing population, the birth rate seems to follow the national trend in a decline which began during the latter part of 1961. That year the California birth rate was 23.2 per 1,000 population; in 1962 it was 22.1, while last year it is estimated to be 21.3—the lowest since 1945.

The number of deaths occurring in the state is estimated to be about 147,000 or about 6,000 more than in 1962. The crude death rate, however, remains approximately the same as in 1961 at 8.3 deaths per 1,000 population.

Of the 147,000 deaths, the proportions due to specific causes remain about the same. Cancer and heart disease continued to account for over half of all deaths. It is estimated that over 8,000 Californians died of accidental causes, at least half of them involving motor vehicles.

It is estimated that about 119,000 marriages took place in the state with 49,000 divorces and 5,900 annulments granted.

The average American child has three episodes of acute illness a year, and one out of five has at least one chronic condition. This is one of the significant findings in the first national survey in the child health field since 1945-46, when the Children's Bureau, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Public Health Service joined forces to study child health needs.

The Children's Bureau has released the findings in a publication entitled "Illness Among Children," which is available at 35 cents a copy from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

The report shows that more than 74 out of every 1,000 children have hay fever, asthma or some other allergic condition, and more than 34 out of every 1,000 have chronic sinusitis, bronchitis or some other respiratory ailment. These two groups of conditions account for more than half of the almost 33 million school days lost because of chronic conditions.

